

FRAGMENTS

Complete Sentence

1. It **must** have both a **subject** and a **verb**.
2. It **must** express a **complete thought**.

Types of Fragments:

Lacking a Verb

Fragment: The smiling little girl

Correct: The smiling little girl ran into the room.

Lacking a Subject

This often occurs when the second verb of a compound verb is cut off from the rest of the sentence. These usually begin with the words for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so.

Fragment: And go shopping.

Correct: Julia likes to travel and go shopping.

Dependent Clause Punctuated as a Sentence

A subject and a verb in a dependent clause may be incorrectly labeled as a sentence. This will leave a reader hanging in mid-air, asking who, when, or why.

How to correct:

Get rid of the subordinate conjunction. This will leave you a simple sentence.

Fragment: After they went to the party.

Correct: After they went to the party, they stopped for tacos.

How to correct:

Connect the dependent clause to an independent clause and create a complex sentence.

Fragment: Even though he didn't study.

Correct: He did well on the test even though he didn't study.

Note: A dependent clause usually begins with a **subordinate conjunction** or a **relative pronoun**.

Subordinate Conjunctions

after	since	when
although	so that	where
as (if)	than	whereas
because	though	wherever
before	unless	whether
if	until	while

Relative Pronouns

that	which	where
whose	what	who
why	whom	whomever
whatever	whoever	whichever

Added Detail Fragments

Added detail fragments lack a subject and a verb. They often begin with one of the following words:

also except including especially for example such as

Writers often think the subject and verb from one sentence will serve the next word group also.

However, **each group requires a subject and verb.**

How to correct: Combine an added detail fragment with the complete thought which precedes it.

Fragment: Since he got married, he helps his wife with household chores. Including washing the dishes, cooking dinner, and taking out the trash.

Correct: Since he got married, he helps his wife with household chores, including washing the dishes, cooking dinner, and taking out the trash.

How to correct: Add a subject and a verb to make it a complete sentence.

Fragment: Kelly loves her new job. Especially helping students and working with the teachers.

Correct: Kelly loves her new job. She especially likes helping students and working with the teachers.

How to correct: Change and/or add words to make the fragment a part of the preceding sentence.

Fragment: He plays several sports. For example, football, baseball, and basketball.

Correct: He plays several sports such as football, baseball, and basketball.

-ing Fragments

When an **-ing** word appears at or near the start of a word group, a fragment may result. Such fragments often lack a subject and part of the verb. We sometimes write **-ing** fragments because we think the subject in one sentence will work for the next word group as well, but the subject must actually be in the sentence.

How to correct: Attach the fragment to the sentence that comes before it or the sentence that comes after it, whichever makes sense.

Fragment: He drove around the block twice. Trying to find a parking space.

Correct: He drove around the block twice trying to find a parking space.

How to correct: Add a subject and change the **-ing** verb part to the correct form of the verb.

Fragment: Dawn thought she looked her best. Interviewing for a new job.

Correct: Dawn thought she looked her best as she interviewed for a new job.

How to correct: Change **being** to the correct form of the verb **be (am, are, is was, were)**.

Fragment: She enjoyed going to her English class. It being her favorite subject.

Correct: She enjoyed going to her English class. It was her favorite subject.

“to” Fragments

When **“to”** appears at or near the start of a word group, a fragment sometimes results:

1

2

3

She went to the Writing Center. to finish her homework. otherwise, she wouldn't get it done.

The second word group is a fragment and can be corrected by adding it to the preceding sentence:

She went to the Writing Center to finish her homework. Otherwise, she wouldn't get it done.

EXERCISE

Correct the following fragments using one of the methods you have just learned.

1. Coming into the room. Julie dropped the pile of books she was carrying. She was exhausted.

2. He works ten hours a day. Then goes to class for three hours. It is no wonder he writes sentence fragments.

3. I get plenty of exercise each day. Walking to school in the morning and home in the afternoon.

4. He was simply too busy. Working and taking four classes last semester.

5. That car needs a paint job, new tires and a muffler. Also a new transmission.

6. I didn't go to the play last night. Because I couldn't get a ticket.

7. When we went to the new club in town, we danced all night. And didn't get tired.

8. Jack went to the market. To get groceries for dinner. He returned later with a bag of potato chips and soda.

9. When Pat went to the new department store, she shopped until she dropped. And she enjoyed every single minute.

10. Julia went to Italy this summer. While her husband stayed home with the children. And she had a good time.
